
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	3400 Connecticut Avenue and 2911 Newark Street, NW	X	Agenda Consent Calendar
Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District		
Meeting Date:	June 25, 2020	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	20-043	X	Alteration
Staff Contact:	Steve Callcott	X	New Construction Demolition Subdivision

Velocity Property Management, with plans prepared by Kasa Architects, seeks on-going conceptual design review for construction of a new corner retail and residential building and an addition to the side of the Macklin apartment building in the Cleveland Park Historic District.

Property Description

The two-building, L-shaped residential and retail complex was designed by architect Mihran Mesrobian in 1939. The three-story Art Deco Macklin apartment building is oriented south to Newark Street with ground-level storefronts facing a corner parking lot. A separate one-story commercial building extends out to Connecticut Avenue with storefronts facing both the parking lot and the avenue; it abuts a row of similar one-story commercial buildings. The site is recognized in the Cleveland Park nomination as “an ingenious mixed-use complex with an unusually sensitive configuration designed in response to its urban context.”

Previous Reviews

The Board has reviewed this project twice. In January, it found the site plan and overall height and mass of the new buildings generally compatible with the historic district but asked that the Macklin addition’s penthouse be removed, it’s fourth floor further set back on the front and back, and the design simplified and revised to better relate to the character of the district. The Board asked that the new residential/retail building have a more unified appearance on all sides, and that making the north wall of the building perpendicular to the east face of the Macklin should be evaluated.

In May, the Board approved the revised concept with the conditions that the north facade of the townhouse/retail building be made perpendicular to the east side of the Macklin, the SE corner of the addition be pulled back to be in the same plane as the SW corner of the Macklin, and that the north (rear) elevation of the 4th floor of the addition should be pulled back 10-12 feet and the south (front) elevation of the 4th floor should be set back 1:1 equivalent to its height.

Revised Proposal

The revised proposal pulls the south elevation of the addition back 3’8” to align the corner of the addition with the corner of Macklin. The set back of the addition’s fourth floor is 6’8” from the pushed-back front elevation. The NW corner of the north elevation has been cut to decrease the perceived width of the fourth floor and additional at-risk windows provided. The

elevation of the Connecticut Avenue frontage of the retail/residential building has been revised to more closely replicate the height and width of the storefronts on the historic commercial buildings on the north side of the courtyard, resulting in three commercial window bays rather than two.

Evaluation

The proposed refinements improve the compatibility of a project that the HPO believes was already compatible with the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District. The setback of the front elevation of the addition makes it more deferential to the Macklin and results in the fourth floor being further recessed from the street. On the rear, the removal of the northwest corner of the fourth floor has a nominal impact, while the additional windows substantially lightens the weight of the elevation. The modified storefront dimensions result in a more complementary relationship with the scale and cadence of the Connecticut Avenue commercial strip.

While the proposal does not respond to all of the Board's previous conditions, the failure to do so does not result in an incompatible project. It is recommended that the Board approve the project as submitted and delegate final approval to staff.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the revised concept to be compatible with the character of the Cleveland Park Historic District and delegate final construction approval to staff.